

South Warwickshire



NHS Foundation Trust

Warwickshire Dietetic Service

**Five Dietary Steps to
a Healthy Heart and
Circulation**

This leaflet can be given to individuals who are already having a healthy diet but would like information more specific to the prevention of heart disease and strokes.

This information can be given out by Doctors, Practice Nurses, District Nurses, Community Nurses, Specialist Nurses and rehab teams.

Introduction

The information in this leaflet can help you to keep your heart and blood vessels healthy. You may have had a heart attack, have high cholesterol levels, diabetes or other health problems that can increase your risk of heart disease or a stroke.

There are 5 key dietary steps you can take to make your diet healthier:

Fruit and Vegetables

The benefits of increasing your fruit and vegetable intake are well researched. They contain substances called 'anti-oxidants' which help reduce damage to the heart and blood vessels. Aim to eat at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables every day.

Saturated Fat

There are different types of fat. There are unsaturated fats, e.g. olive oil, sunflower oil, rapeseed oil and spreads made from these oils. These are better for our heart than saturated fats, e.g. butter, lard, ghee, fat on meat, full fat dairy products and processed meats. Consider reducing your intake of saturated fat and swap for small amounts of unsaturated fats. This is important if you have a high cholesterol.

Salt

The current recommendations for salt intake are to have no more than 6g per day. High salt foods include salted snacks like crisps or peanuts, tinned and packet soups and sauces, tinned, cured or smoked meat, tinned and smoked fish and cheese. If you have high blood pressure, it is important to check your salt intake is not too high. Everyone could benefit from not adding extra salt to meals and during cooking. Consider adding alternative flavourings, e.g. pepper, herbs or spices.

Alcohol

Alcohol is not essential for a balanced diet and can have a significant affect on your triglyceride level and your body weight. It is recommended that for both men and women of all ages, you should have no more than fourteen units of alcohol per week. You should also aim to have two alcohol free days a week and avoid 'binge' drinking. Fourteen units is equivalent to 6 pints of 4% beer or 6 glasses (175mLs) of 13% strength wine.

Fibre

Eating plenty of fibre will help lower your risk of heart disease and damage to your blood vessels. Sources include fruit and vegetables, wholegrain breakfast cereals, wholegrain bread, pasta, rice and pulses, e.g. wheat biscuits, porridge, beans, lentils and chickpeas. It is recommended to aim for 30g of fibre per day.

Key non-dietary steps to a healthy heart and circulation:

Smoking Cessation

Smoking can increase your risk of heart disease and stroke. If you smoke, now is a good time to stop. Your doctor or practice nurse will be able to help you with this or you can contact the NHS Stop Smoking line on 0300 123 1044.

Keep Physically Active

Keeping active can strengthen heart muscles and help reduce cholesterol levels. Guidelines for adults aged 19-64 is to try and be active daily, aiming for 150 minutes of moderate intensity exercise weekly, e.g. walking or cycling. You should also include strength exercises, which works all the major muscles, on two or more days of the week.

Adults aged over 65 who are generally fit and have no health conditions that limit their mobility should try to be active daily and should also follow the advice above. Some older adults are at risk of falls, e.g. people with weak legs, poor balance and some medical conditions. Exercises to improve balance and co-ordination, e.g. yoga or dancing should be included on at least 2 days per week.

For further information on the advice provided in this diet sheet please visit the websites below:

NHS Choices, Live Well - <https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/>

British Heart Foundation - <http://www.bhf.org.uk/>

The Stroke Association - <http://www.stroke.org.uk/>

British Dietetic Association - <https://www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts/home>

British Hypertension society - <http://www.bhsoc.org/>

Personal Goals:

Equality Statement

At South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust we are fully committed to equality and diversity, both as an employer and as a service provider. We have a policy statement in our Equality Strategy that clearly outlines our commitment to equality for service users, patients and staff:

You and your family have the right to be treated fairly and be routinely involved in decisions about your treatment and care. You can expect to be treated with dignity and respect. You will not be discriminated against on any grounds including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

You have a responsibility to treat other service users, patients and our staff with dignity and respect.

Our information for patients can also be made available in other languages, Braille, audio tape, disc or in large print.

PALS

We offer a Patient Advice Liaison Service (PALS). This is a confidential service for families to help with any questions or concerns about local health services.

You can contact the service by the direct telephone line on 01926 600 054 by email:

Pals@swft.nhs.uk or by calling in person to the PALS Office which is located in the Lakin Road entrance to the hospital.

If you have any queries about your diet, please contact us on 01926 600818, selecting option 3.

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